

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

RECOGNIZING 50 YEARS OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 577) recognizing 50 years of relations between the United States Government and the European Union, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 577

Whereas on May 9, 1950, 6 countries of Europe, committed to promoting a united Europe, founded the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which has evolved into the European Union (EU);

Whereas in November 1953 the United States sent its first diplomatic observers to the European Coal and Steel Community;

Whereas in 1954 the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community commissioned the United States law firm of Clearly and Gottlieb to open an Information Office in Washington, District of Columbia, thus establishing the first official presence of the precursor to the European Union in the United States;

Whereas on November 18, 2003, Secretary of State Colin Powell, while in Brussels, Belgium, dedicating a plaque commemorating 50 years of cooperation between the United States and the European Union stated that "the United States embraces the European Union as a global partner for peace and security . . . and that the world's best hope for meeting [global] challenges still rests, in large part, on a deep, broad, and lasting partnership between Europe and the United States";

Whereas although differences of opinion have existed on a broad array of issues over the past 50 years, there remains an important foundation of shared values across the Atlantic which reaffirms that the current strengths and common interests of the United States and the European Union far outweigh the differences;

Whereas an effective political partnership between the United States and the European Union has continued to develop over the past 50 years in many areas of vital common interest which has resulted in the United States and European Union consistently and effectively working together for prosperous, stable, and democratic world;

Whereas the events of the past several years, including the events of September 11, 2001, have increased the need for forceful and coordinated strategic cooperation between the United States and the European Union on economic, trade, and domestic and foreign security matters;

Whereas the economic foundations for the United States-European Union partnership are a central and irreversible reality of the world economy;

Whereas to effectively manage the United States-European Union partnership, closer institutional linkages and other mechanisms to facilitate more direct and continuous United States-European Union dialogue are necessary; and

Whereas in May 2004, an event commemorating 50 years of relations between the United States and the European Union will take place in Washington, District of Columbia: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) celebrates the 50th anniversary of relations between the United States and the European Union;

(2) commends the United States mission to the European Union and the mission of the European Commission to the United States for the professional representation of the interests of the United States and European Union over the past 50 years;

(3) recognizes that continued cooperation between the United States and the European Union is essential to resolving international disputes, promoting peace, expanding global economic opportunity, combating global threats, and being prepared to respond to unforeseen events; and

(4) encourages enhanced United States-European Union strategic discussion and institutional cooperation, including increased discussions between representatives of the United States Congress and the European Parliament through the Transatlantic Legislator's Dialogue.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Nebraska?

There was no objection.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 577, as amended. I would note for my colleagues that two amendments were made to the original text of this resolution. One more precisely addresses the history of the EU and one notes that an event at the Department of State regarding the anniversary has now taken place.

Mr. Speaker, 53 years ago, in an effort to rebuild and integrate a war-devastated economic system throughout Europe, six nations of Europe came together and signed the European Coal and Steel Community treaty (ECSC) in Paris on April 18, 1951. Since then, the coal and steel community has evolved to become what we now refer to as the European Union. In 1953, the United States government sent its first diplomatic observers to the European Coal and Steel Community and one year later, in 1954, the High Authority of the ECSC established its first official presence in the United States. This resolution which we have under consideration today recognizes 50 years of formal relationship between the United States and the European Union.

Mr. Speaker, relations with Europe have been an integral part of our own history. The importance of that relationship became even more clear as the Euro-Atlantic community entered the postwar period in 1945. During that pe-

riod and throughout the Cold War, the United States and Europe developed a strong set of shared values, common interests, mutual political goals, and fully integrated economies. The cooperation which has developed between the United States and Europe has resulted in an effective partnership which has met the global challenges of building a peaceful, secure, democratic and prosperous world.

Yet as we all know, the relationship has not always been cordial. We have had our differences of opinion on many issues. The relationship has had what some might consider "defining moments." But as we have seen over these past 50 years, the melding of our common interests and the strength of our partnership has far outweighed the differences we have encountered.

Last November, the U.S. Mission in Brussels, led by Ambassador Rockwell Schnabel, held an event to kick off the 50th anniversary of relations between the United States and the European Union. Secretary of State Colin Powell attended the ceremony and dedicated a plaque commemorating the anniversary. In his statement, the Secretary noted that the "United States embraces the European Union as a global partner for peace and security and that the world's best hope for meeting global challenges still rests, in large part, on a deep, broad and lasting partnership between Europe and the United States."

Last week, on May 6, a similar event was held here in Washington at the Department of State which continued the celebration. One difference between the November event and this month's event is the fact that by virtue of the enlargement of the European Union which took place on May 1, the celebration here in Washington was with 25 nations of Europe rather than 15. As we welcome those 10 new members of the European Union, we welcome the opportunity to develop an even stronger partnership with the EU and its member states.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, H. Res. 577 recognizes the 50th anniversary of U.S.-EU relations. It reaffirms the importance of cooperation between the United States and Europe. It encourages closer institutional linkages in order to facilitate a more direct and continuous dialogue with Europe and its union. Finally, the resolution supports an enhanced dialogue between this institution, the Congress, and our colleagues in the European Parliament.

I urge the adoption of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to commend the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER), chair of the Subcommittee on Europe, for this excellent resolution. I also want to thank our colleagues who played a role

in bringing this resolution forward: the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEXLER), the ranking member of the subcommittee; the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS), chair of the Transatlantic Legislators Dialogue, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT), and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Mr. Speaker, May 1, 2004, was a historic day. Ten days ago, the European Union expanded to a total of 25 member countries with the addition of 10 new member states to the European Union. This was the largest expansion in the organization's almost half a century of history. Most remarkably, 8 of the 10 countries became new members of the European Union that were formerly members of the Soviet bloc. Having seen on countless occasions firsthand the trials and challenges these countries faced in the 50 years following the Second World War, I am personally delighted and encouraged at the prospects that this new union will give to these countries.

The 10 new member states bring an additional 75 million citizens to the European Union. The population of the European Union, as we all know, now surpasses that of our own country. The economic output of the 25-member European Union is very near to our own. With open and free borders, common economic policies and shared security objectives, the new European Union can and will become an even stronger economic and political force globally.

Mr. Speaker, this expansion of the European Union extends the zone of economic and political stability and security hundreds of miles to the east.

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It anchors the new member states in an economic and political union that is committed to democratic values and respect for civil and human rights and the rule of law.

The new member countries which were formerly part of the Soviet sphere have had more limited experience with democratic governments and the free market economy. Their participation in the EU will provide new experience and a stronger commitment to these vital values that we share with the European Union.

Mr. Speaker, while the effects of this EU expansion will be different for every one of the new member states, it is clear that there is potential benefit for the United States in this historic development. We in the Congress welcome this new expansion of the European Union, and we reaffirm our desire to continue the positive relationship that we have had with the European Union and its predecessor organizations over the last half century.

The U.S.-European relationship is critical to stability and security throughout the globe. To the extent that we cooperate and work together, the entire world will be a safer and more prosperous place. But to the extent that our political and economic

relations are in disarray, the entire world will suffer.

Mr. Speaker, in the economic sphere I call upon the united European Union, and particularly the new member states as well as our own government, to focus our relations on working together to resolve the trade and economic differences that occasionally divide us. Our economic ties are far too important to be dominated by minor disputes.

In the political and security sphere, it is critical that we cooperate in dealing with the threat of terrorism and the challenges that face all of our societies. I urge all member countries of the European Union to work with the United States to assure that our significant mutual interests take precedence over less important irritants that have strained our relations in recent times.

Mr. Speaker, our resolution welcomes a historic change in the European Union. We in the United States stand to gain much from this change, and we should all welcome it. I urge all of my colleagues to support H. Res. 577.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS).

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, to the chairman and the ranking member I want to thank them for bringing this resolution to the floor. I have had a chance to speak in a Special Order and tie the EU expansion also to NATO expansion. And what it does is it brings a Europe whole, united, and free; and I think it brings great opportunity for the world, stability in the region, the ability for the European Union countries to help be more active in their backyard as they have committed to bolster their ability to respond based upon the Petersburg task but also a commitment to NATO in the Article V self-defense relationship that makes the transatlantic nations so important. It ties the North American continent to Europe in a stronger fabric that I think will really benefit the Nation and democratic institutions for years to come.

As we know, there are constant threats to democracy and liberty around the world. So I think I speak for many of our colleagues who will get a chance to either vocally vote "yes" or to do it through a registered vote by saying wherever democracy, liberty, freedom, the rule of law prevail, we as a country and as a world are stronger because of that.

So I, too, want to welcome the new members to the EU. I also want to applaud the old members for their reaching out and the invitation for these new members; and I want to tie that to the great self-defense organization that we know and have loved for so long, which is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. That transatlantic link will serve us both well from now and into the future.

I want to applaud the ranking member; I want to applaud the chairman. And I thank the chairman for yielding me this time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as I was listening to the distinguished gentleman from California, I was thinking how remarkable this must look to him in particular since as a boy and a young man, he grew up in a very different part of Europe and a different kind of system in Hungary and what a contribution the gentleman has made. I recall in my second or third term, I became, fortunately, a member of what we then called the U.S. House-European Parliamentary Exchange, and the gentleman was the chairman for all of those years in which his party was in the majority; and I remember the outstanding leadership and education he gave this Member in those years.

And I think back to how remarkable it is for all of us, but perhaps especially for the gentleman, that the line drawn across Europe at Yalta which brought down the Iron Curtain to which Winston Churchill referred. It separated the countries that had been a part of a whole, and now gradually we have seen that curtain lifted and we have a united Europe.

Just this morning I had a chance to examine a proposed welcome from one of our Slovak parliamentary colleagues, Josef Banas. Mr. Banas was preparing his welcome to our spring meeting of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, which will be in their capital city, Bratislava, Slovakia, over the Memorial Day recess to drive his point home how much things have changed and how much joy is in his country as one of the 10 new members of the European Union, one of the seven new members of NATO.

He talked about his mother, who has lived and is yet living in a small village near Bratislava. She was born in that village before World War I, and he was tracing how many different countries and different political systems she has lived under in her time, even though she has never moved from that village. It has been that kind of remarkable change in Central Europe which we have witnessed in the years since World War I, but especially remarkable changes since World War II.

I want to thank the gentleman for his leadership all these years on European issues, and I want to say that I am enthusiastic about the current leadership, both Democrat and Republican, on what is now called, and I am still having a hard time with the new name, the Transatlantic Legislative Dialogue. And the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS) has a statement which will be submitted under General Leave. She would have liked to have been here today to participate in this dialogue, and I very

much wish the gentleman well as he continues this dialogue with European parliamentarians.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BEREUTER. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, let me first thank him for his most generous observations, and let me again say how deeply we will miss his enormous contributions to this body as he assumes new and bigger responsibilities.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his kind remarks, and I know that Europe will be in good hands. That is why I am moving my focus to a different continent.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, today, the House will debate H. Res. 577, a resolution recognizing 50 years of relations between the United States and the European Union. I hope the House overwhelmingly approves this resolution.

The U.S. and EU not only have shared values and an indisputable friendship, but also shared global responsibilities. Responsibilities that are grave in light of the terrorist threat facing our world today. The U.S. and EU must continue to work together to root out terrorism around the world, and seek to promote peace and stability. I am pleased to note that members of the EU and the U.S. are currently working alongside each other in both Afghanistan and Iraq to combat terrorism, and to ensure that these countries successfully make the transition toward democracy.

In addition to our shared interest in promoting global security, the U.S. and the EU share economic interests. The U.S. and the EU have the largest bilateral trading and investment relationship in the world with transatlantic flows of trade and investment amounting to roughly \$1 billion a day.

Mr. Speaker, President Bush has stated that strong ties between America and Europe are essential to peace and the prosperity of the world. I believe that both sides will remain committed to fostering the relationship so that together the U.S. and the EU can promote their common goals and interests in the world much more effectively.

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 577 noting the 50th Anniversary of formal relations between the United States and the European Union.

Fifty years ago the United States government sent its first diplomatic representatives to what was then the European Coal and Steel Community because the U.S. Government was fully supportive of the integration of Europe's economic systems as a way to help rebuild a war-torn continent. One year later, in 1954, the High Representative of the Coal and Steel Community opened an office here in Washington.

In November, the United States Mission in Brussels held a ceremony marking the beginning of the anniversary. Last week, a similar ceremony was held at the State Department to continue the celebration. H. Res. 577 reminds us that over these past five decades, we and Europe have worked to develop a common bond based on values, shared views of the need to promote democracy and market reform and a commitment to stability and peace throughout the world. As our Europe Subcommittee Chairman has said, the relationship

has not always been easy or friendly. We have had some serious disagreements. Nevertheless, it should be clear to this House that a strong and mature transatlantic relationship is critical to the long-term political, economic and security interests of the United States. It is also clear that one of the central ingredients to a successful transatlantic partnership is a stable, integrated and dynamic Europe.

Recently, I traveled to Europe with a delegation of our House Colleagues to participate in the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue. Our meetings with our Colleagues from the European Parliament were frank, but cordial. It reaffirmed the need for continuous dialogue and understanding of how we each view those common challenges which face us and how we should respond. I appreciate the fact that H. Res. 577 notes that the TLD is an important aspect of this U.S.-EU relationship.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I want to remind my Colleagues that on Saturday, May 1st, we witnessed yet another historic event in the evolution of the European Union. On that day 10 new nations of Europe joined the European Union. What began just fifty-three years ago as a Union of 6 has now become a Union of 25. As the U.S. Chairman of the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue, I look forward to meeting and working with the Parliamentarians of these newest members who soon take their seats in the European Parliament and who will be part of the next fifty years of U.S.-EU relations.

I urge adoption of this Resolution.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this symbolic and commemorative resolution that speaks to our commitment to the establishment of continued and ever-growing ties with the European Union (E.U.). Especially given the dangers that plague the international community as a whole, it is important that we do everything we can to break bread with our international partners to form alliances against those who threaten to do our families harm.

The European Union and the United States are the two largest economies in the world and jointly account for about half the entire world economy. The E.U. and the U.S. have also the largest bi-lateral trading and investment relationship. Transatlantic trade and investment amount to around \$1 billion a day, and jointly, our global trade accounts for almost 40 percent of world trade. By working together, the U.S. and the E.U. can promote their common goals and interests in the world much more effectively.

According to information gathered by the European Community's Trade Directorate General, the United States and the European Union have had the most prolific commercial relationship in the world and have been each other's largest trade and investment partners. In 2002, E.U. exports to the United States were estimated at \$227.9 billion, representing 24.1 percent of total E.U. exports. E.U. imports from the United States totaled \$166.1 billion, representing 17.7 percent of total E.U. imports.

Investment of E.U. firms in U.S. markets has been growing consistently. In fact, direct investments in the U.S. amounted to \$863 billion in 2002. Together, both nations employ about 4 million respectively.

In a similar trend, American investment in the E.U. totaled \$700 billion in 2002. The initiation of the Economic and Monetary Union on

January 1, 1999 improved and facilitated American investment by providing a maturing Single Market.

The relationship between the E.U. and the U.S. exists even on a nation-to-state level. In December 2001, the European Union Center, one of 15 such Centers in the entire U.S., was established at Texas A&M University and was supported by funding from the European Commission to form a Network of European Union Centers.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) launched its Container Security Initiative (CSI) in the area of maritime security after the attacks of 9/11. Our main concern was the possibility of containers being used for terrorist attacks either against ports of the United States or against a participant in maritime transport. As a first step, the U.S. has invited about twenty mega-ports worldwide to join this initiative.

As a Member of the House Select Committee on Homeland Security, I applaud the fact that the U.S. has signed declarations of principle (bi-lateral agreements) on the application of its Container Security Initiative (CSI) in individual ports with eight E.U. Member States—the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom and Sweden. These bilateral agreements propose to shortly involve the stationing of U.S. customs officials in many of the ports that have significant container traffic to the United States.

In terms of formal agreements between the E.U. and the U.S., the two have executed the Transatlantic Declaration, the New Transatlantic Agenda, and the Transatlantic Economic Partnership.

The Transatlantic Declaration was adopted by the U.S. and the E.U. in 1990. This document set forth principles for greater E.U.-U.S. cooperation and consultation in economy, education, science, and culture.

In 1995, the New Transatlantic Agenda (NTA) and the E.U.-U.S. Joint Action Plan were adopted. The NTA and the Joint Action Plan stimulated partnership and cooperation under four areas: promoting peace and stability, democracy and development around the world; responding to global changes; contributing to the expansion of world trade and fostering closer ties; and building bridges across the Atlantic.

The Transatlantic Economic Partnership (TEP) was executed at the London summit in May 1998. The TEP is an extension of the spirit and premise behind the NTA. It includes both multilateral and bilateral elements. Bilaterally the purpose is to tackle technical barriers to trade. The purpose of the second part is to stimulate further multilateral liberalization—by joining forces on international trade issues. An innovative aspect of the proposal is to integrate labor, business, environmental and consumer issues into the process. It is, however, too early to say what will come out of this partnership.

Mutual commitment to "full and equal partnership" in economic, political, and security matters was the hallmark of the Bonn Declaration adopted by both nations at the 21 June 1999 E.U.-U.S. summit held in June 1999 in Bonn. The Bonn Declaration outlines how the E.U. and the U.S. want to shape their relationship over the next decade and is embedded in the NTA process.

The record of joint efforts to strengthen the economic, social, and diplomatic ties between

the European Union and the United States demonstrates that we can do even better. I commend my colleague Mr. BEREUTER for his efforts and leadership in bringing this important resolution to the Floor. It will help to improve our record even more through its representation of the voice of Congress.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HAYES). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 577, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT OF SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM TO RELEASE FATHER THADDEUS NGUYEN VAN LY

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 378) calling on the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to immediately and unconditionally release Father Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 378

Whereas in February 2001, Father Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly, a Roman Catholic priest was formally invited to testify before the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom but was denied permission to leave the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and thus, instead, submitted written testimony critical of Vietnam which was read into the Commission record on February 13, 2001;

Whereas Father Ly's testimony before the Commission documents numerous specific actions of the Government of Vietnam against religious freedom which he classified as collectively being "extremely cruel" and requiring a "non-violent and persistent campaign" to achieve full religious freedom for all people in Vietnam;

Whereas Father Ly has been detained by the Government of Vietnam since February 2001, when it placed Father Ly under administrative detention—as a direct response to his testimony, branding him a traitor for "slandering" the Communist party and "distorting" the religious policy of the Government of Vietnam;

Whereas the Government of Vietnam issued a second decree suspending Father Ly's ability to "carry on any religious responsibility and functions" and later formally removed Father Ly from his church, detained him, and denied him access to adequate legal counsel;

Whereas on October 19, 2001, the Thua Thien Hue Provincial People's Court convicted Father Ly of all charges after a one

day, closed trial, without the benefit of counsel and sentenced him to two years in prison for violating the terms of his administrative detention, thirteen years in prison for "damaging the Government's unity policy", and 5 years of administrative probation upon release from prison;

Whereas after pleas from United States Government officials and the world community Father Ly's sentence was reduced by 5 years;

Whereas in June 2001, Father Ly's nephews Nguyen Vu Viet, age 27, and Nguyen Truc Cuong, age 36, and his niece Nguyen Thi Hoa, age 44, were arrested for allegedly being in contact and receiving support from organizations in the United States concerning the religious situation in Vietnam and disseminating information concerning the detention of Father Ly;

Whereas after their cases generated much concern in Congress, Nguyen Thi Hoa, Nguyen Vu Viet and Nguyen Truc Cuong all have been or are expected to be released shortly;

Whereas on November 27, 2003, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued Opinion No. 20/2003 stating "the Group is convinced that [Father Ly] has been arrested and detained only for his opinions . . . [and] the deprivation of the liberty of Father Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly is arbitrary, as being in contravention of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights";

Whereas Father Ly has been deprived of his basic human rights by being denied his ability to exercise freedom of opinion and expression; and

Whereas the arbitrary imprisonment and the violation of the human rights of citizens of Vietnam are sources of continuing, grave concern to Congress;

Whereas continuing concerns regarding human rights in Vietnam were recently highlighted by large demonstrations in the Central Highlands on April 10 and 11, 2004, in which thousands of Montagnards gathered on Easter weekend to protest their treatment by the Government of Vietnam, including the confiscation of tribal lands and ongoing restrictions on religious activities; and

Whereas although the Government of Vietnam has attempted to control information about the April 2004 protests and access to the Central Highlands, reputable human rights organizations have reported that the protests were met with a violent response and that many demonstrators were arrested, injured, or are in hiding, and that others were killed; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That—

(1) Congress—

(A) condemns and deplores the arbitrary detention of Father Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly by the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and calls for his immediate and unconditional release;

(B) condemns and deplores the violations of freedom of speech, religion, movement, association, and the lack of due process afforded to individuals in Vietnam;

(C) strongly urges the Government of Vietnam to consider the implications of its actions for the broader relationship between the United States and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, including the impact on trade relations;

(D) urges the Government of Vietnam to allow unfettered access to the Central Highlands by foreign diplomats, the international press, and nongovernmental organizations; and

(E) condemns the extent of the violence used against Montagnard protesters on April 10 and 11, 2004, and the use of any violence

against peaceful protests and demonstrations; and

(2) it is the sense of Congress that the United States—

(A) should make the immediate release of Father Ly a top concern;

(B) should continue to urge the Government of Vietnam to comply with internationally recognized standards for basic freedoms and human rights;

(C) should make it clear to the Government of Vietnam that the detention of Father Ly and other persons and the infliction of human rights violations on these individuals are not in the interest of Vietnam because they create obstacles to improved bilateral relations and cooperation with the United States; and

(D) should reiterate the deep concern of the United States regarding the continued imprisonment of Father Ly, and other persons whose human rights are being violated, and discuss their legal status and immediate humanitarian needs with the Government of Vietnam.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Vietnam likes to say that Vietnam is a country, not a war. It is a catchy little self-evident phrase that some Members of Congress picked up during the bilateral trade agreement debate, as if to suggest that the debate was somehow about the Vietnam War, which it was not, instead of Vietnam's shameful present-day human rights record, which it was.

Of course Vietnam is a country, to which I respond: behave like an honorable country. Live up to their word as a signatory to numerous human rights covenants, including the international covenant on political and civil rights. Stop bringing dishonor and shame to their government by abusing their own people.

Mr. Speaker, according to the U.S. State Department report, the "Report on Human Rights Practices for 2003": "The Government's human rights record remained poor, and it continued to commit serious abuses." Rather than repress and jail, harass, intimidate, and torture, the government should recognize and reflect the innate goodness of the Vietnamese people, a kind, gentle, compassionate people who deserve better, much better.

Take the case of Father Ly. In February 2001, Father Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly submitted written testimony to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom for a hearing at which he was invited to testify. He was not able to testify in person, but submitted written testimony which I will include in its entirety in the RECORD.

Because this brave Catholic priest told the truth, spoke the truth to power, the Government of Vietnam persecuted and cruelly mistreated him;